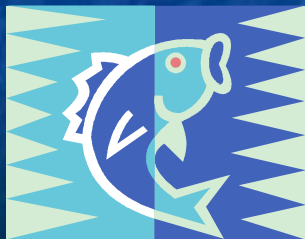


Development of an Interagency Electronic Fishery Information Collection and Management Program in Alaska



Gail Smith
Research Analyst
Computer Services Division
Commercial Fisheries
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Commercial Fisheries –Alaska

Five major fisheries executed off-shore
Alaska:

- Halibut – International Commission
- Groundfish – NMFS and State
- Shellfish – State and NMFS
- Herring – State
- Salmon - State

Commercial Fisheries -Alaska

- Groundfish and halibut reporting falls under the jurisdiction of three agencies - NMFS, IPHC and the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Reporting is co-mingled.
- The *integrated* electronic reporting program is limited to groundfish. The reporting program will be fully applicable to all fisheries in Alaska – shellfish, herring and salmon.



Background

- The ADF&G staff review and data enter approximately 300,000 fish ticket landing reports each year. Each paper form costs the Department 13 cents.
- As a result of permit stacking, one fishing trip may generate several fish tickets.

Background

- Processors complete the fish ticket forms by hand and then enter the information into their own data systems.
- Fish tickets, containing both halibut and non-halibut harvest, are reviewed and data processed by both ADF&G and IPHC.

Background

- Fish tickets are data processed, on average, within 30 days.
- Fish ticket data is not a timely tool to assist with in-season management for all fisheries.
- In-season managers have developed informal methods to obtain timely catch statistics.

Background

- All the agencies use other data collection processes to verify and augment the information provided by vessel operators and processors:
 - Dock-side interviews with vessel operators.
 - Biological catch sampling.
 - Logbook information.
 - Observer information.
 - VMS data.



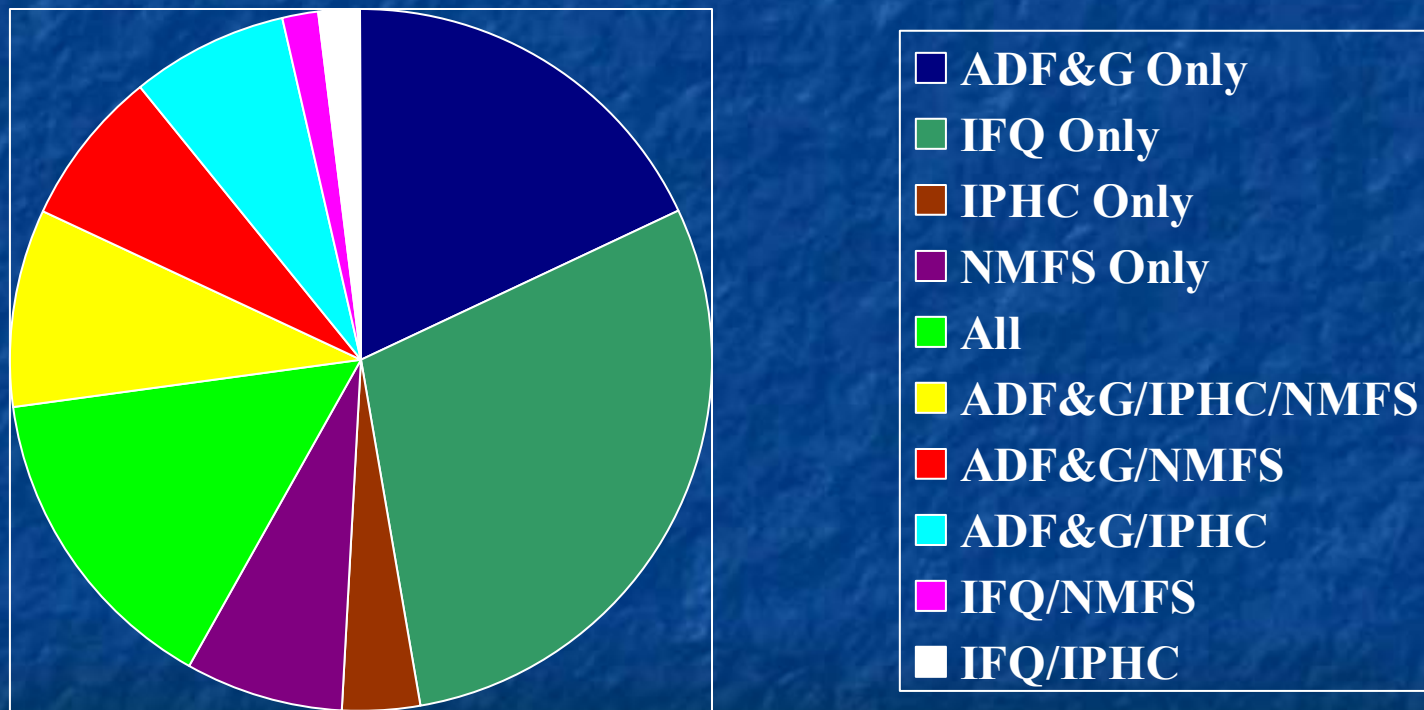
Web Based Catch and Production Reporting

Fish and Game, the Alaska Region of National Marine Fisheries Service, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission are engaged in a project to develop integrated, web-based commercial catch and production reporting.

History of Interagency Electronic Reporting Program

- Processors have requested consistent and coordinated coding systems for commercial catch reporting.
- ADF&G, NMFS, and IPHC have made an effort within the last five years to coordinate coding systems.
- Processors have also requested non-duplicative reporting to mgt agencies.

Required Data Elements



History of Interagency Electronic Reporting Program

- All management agencies have had a long-term desire to have comprehensive groundfish and halibut data available in-season.
- ADF&G and IPHC have a desire to reduce the cost of printing, distributing, and data processing of paper fish tickets.

History of Interagency Electronic Reporting Program

- Current paper-based data collection contributes to database errors.
- Lack of timely harvest data creates additional data collection schemes.
- Fish ticket documentation requirements do not accommodate business activity sequence.

Authorization

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act recommends that States, Councils, and Marine Fisheries Commissions develop integrated and non-duplicative information collection programs. 104-297 Sec. 401

Interagency Electronic Reporting Program

Why Now?

- Interagency cooperation well established and positive.
- Increasing need for more timely, trip level data.
- Growth of Internet in general and across Alaska.
- Success of NMFS eLog desktop and IFQ web-based reporting systems.

Project Milestones

- ADF&G, NMFS, and IPHC established a steering committee to explore feasibility.

Galen Tromble – NMFS AK Region

Dave Ackley – NMFS AK Region

Jessica Gharrett – RAM Division, NMFS AK Region

Gail Smith – ADF&G

Phil Witt – ADF&G

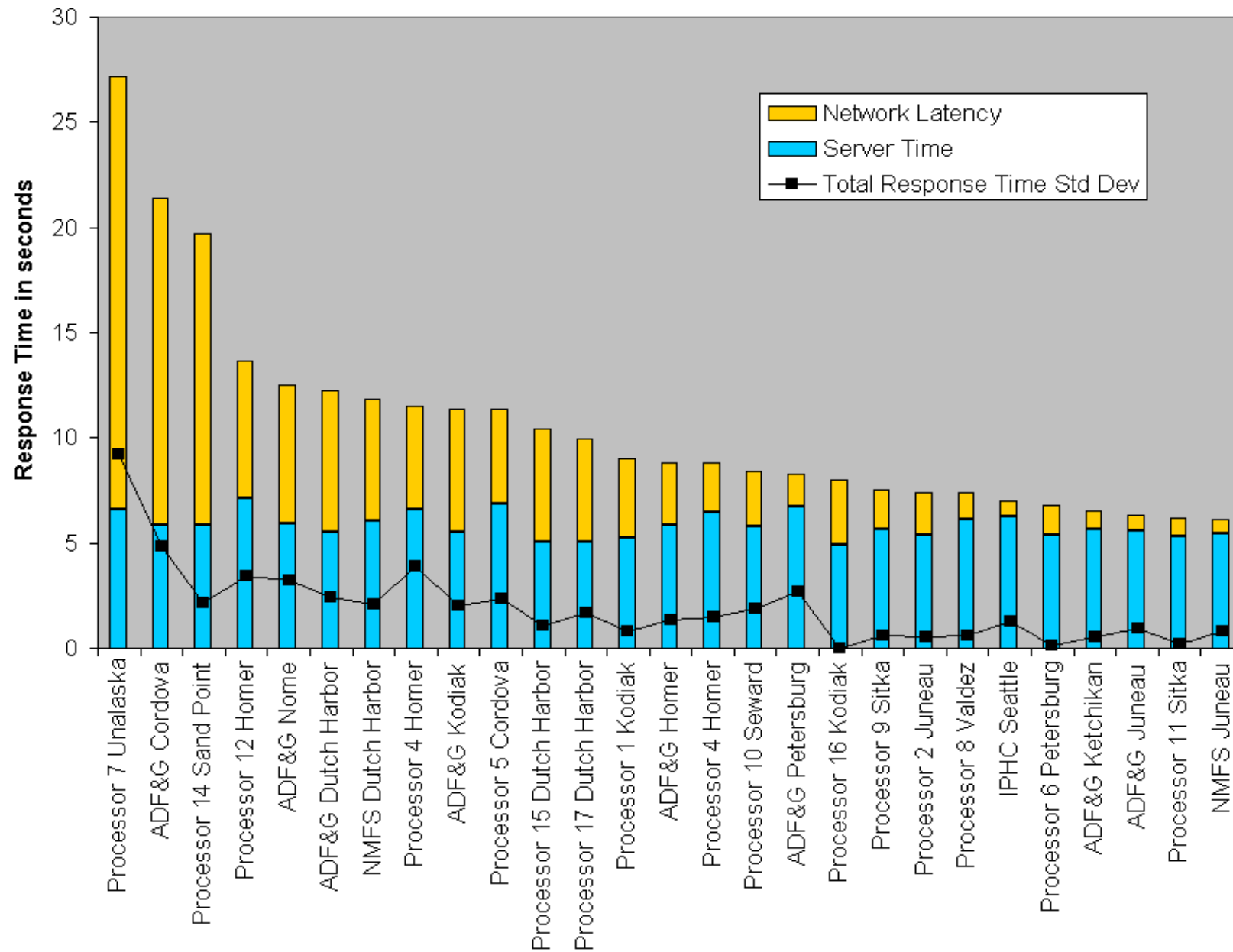
Heather Gilory – IPHC

Dave Colpo - PSMFC

Project Milestones

- Initial needs assessment was completed.
- An assessment of the internet connection throughout Alaska has been completed.
- An initial interagency meeting has been completed to identify implementation challenges.

50 Line Reports with Validation Errors



Project Goals and Standards

- Collect timely commercial catch statistics that meet the needs of agencies tasked with oversight, management and enforcement.
- Reduce redundant reporting.
- Develop a data collection system that considers the business constraints of industry.
- Allow for web based and conventional reporting systems.

Project Goals and Standards

- Provide paper documentation to fishers, processors, and Mgt agencies.
- Multiple landing documents joined by unique trip number.
- Staged documentation – initial landing report followed by disposition and production information.
- Improve data quality.
- Adhere to regulations.

Envisioned Benefits

- Agencies
 - More timely data.
 - More accurate data.
 - Integrated, trip level data.
 - Significant reduction in data processing.
 - Significant reduction in the cost of printing and distributing fish ticket forms.
- Processors
 - Reduction in duplicative reporting.
 - Reduction in duplicative documentation.

Challenges



- Agency coordination and program governance.
- Regulatory coordination with multiple agencies.
- Confidentiality.
- User and data submitter management.
- System and change management.

Staged Implementation

Build on what is learned at each stage of implementation to insure success and manage change.

- Prototype system – groundfish
- Full implementation with groundfish
- BSAI crab
- Remaining Shellfish
- Herring
- Salmon



Funding

- Funding for this project is a \$750,000 grant from Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.
- To date, including administrative fees, the project has spent \$270,000.

Funding



- The Steering Committee estimates that current funding will allow the full deployment of integrated groundfish reporting.
- Additional funds will need to be secured to fully implement the program to other fisheries.

Questions

